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investigations not yet published. He has separated and begun the study of three organisms that rapidly destroy nitrates with the formation of free nitrogen. One was obtained from a sample of soil, another one from pig manure and the third one from hen manure. The first two belong to the class of organisms which liquefy gelatine and produce a green or yellowish green fluorescent pigment. They belong to the same or closely related species. For comparison of these organisms, cultures of all similar organisms obtainable have been procured from the bacteriological laboratories of the United States Marine Hospital Service and of the Surgeon-General of the Army. The organisms thus far examined in regard to this property are the following: Two cultures from different sources of *B. pyocyaneus*, two of *B. fluorescens liquefaciens* and one each of *B. pyocyaneus*, *B. pyocyaneus D.* and *B. pyocyaneus pericarditidis*.

From the description given by Schirokikh of the organism found by him in horse manure it would appear that it is also of this class.

The study of the organisms isolated by Ewell will be continued and reported at the proper time; the investigation is to be extended to include soils of the various types, the feces of all the domestic animals, and various fodders, etc., in order that we may develop as fully as possible our knowledge of the nature and habitat of all organisms possessing the power to reduce nitrates with the liberation of free nitrogen.

Numerous bottles of nitragin have been received in this country, and I believe experiments are now in progress in many of our experiment stations in its use. The practical demonstrations which have been made, however, of its utility have been made at European stations, and many of the results which have been obtained in this country have not yet been published. Many interesting contributions to the liter-

ature of the subject will doubtless come from our own stations in the near future. Important work has already been done in studying the nodules of leguminous plants in many of our stations, especially in those of Massachusetts, Louisiana and Illinois.

(To be concluded.)

H. W. WILEY.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

#### THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NATURALISTS.

THE annual meeting of the 'Naturalists' and 'Affiliated Scientific Societies' was held at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, December 28, 29, 30, 1897. The mild weather and attractive surroundings, together with the unbounded hospitality of the people of Ithaca and an excellent program and large attendance, combined to make the meeting more than usually successful.

In the absence of the President, Professor Whitman, of the University of Chicago, the chair was occupied by Professor S. F. Clarke, of Williams College, one of the founders of the Society. After listening to the Report of the Treasurer, action was taken on certain items of business.

Communications from the President of Columbia University, the President of the American Museum of Natural History, and the Secretary of the New York Academy of Sciences, inviting the Society to hold its next meeting in New York City, were read and referred to the Executive Committee. The Society subsequently decided to accept the invitations from New York.

It was reported that President McKinley was about to appoint a commissioner to serve in the place of Mr. John J. Brice and, in view of the present deplorable condition of the scientific work of the Commission, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

"*Resolved*, That the American Society of Naturalists, as representatives of the principal scientific and educational interests of this country, unanimously express to the President and Congress of the United States their sentiment that the Commissioner of Fish and Fisheries should, according to the law of 1888, governing his appointment, be 'a person of proved scientific and practical acquaintance with the fish and fisheries of the coast.'

"*Resolved*, That it is of the utmost importance that the Fish Commission, as one of the most useful scientific institutions of the government, should be free from political influence and should be administered with the highest degree of scientific efficiency by an experienced officer."

It was then voted that Professor H. F. Osborn, of Columbia University, be a delegate to convey the resolutions of the Society to the President of the United States, and the members were asked to urge their Congressmen to prevent the appointment of any person unfitted for the place. The keen interest that was manifest in the discussion is a guarantee to Mr. McKinley that if his appointment is in accord with the spirit of the law he will gain the active support of scientific men throughout the country.

Professor T. H. Morgan stated that the 'American Tables' at Naples were quite inadequate to the needs of American students, and that were it not for the unlimited generosity of Professor Dohrn many Americans could not have availed themselves of the privileges of the Zoological Station. Professor Osborn said that a friend of Columbia University had offered two hundred and fifty dollars towards the five hundred necessary for the support of an additional table, and Professor John B. Smith moved that the Society appropriate one hundred dollars to be added to that already in the hands of Professor Osborn. It was so voted. It was also voted that that fifty dollars be appropriated for the continuance of the 'Naturalists' Table' at Woods Holl.

An amendment to the constitution, providing for the extension of the territory in which the Society may meet, was actively

discussed, but failed of the number of votes necessary for its passage. The members then listened to the annual discussion on 'The Biological Problems of To-day.'

Paleontology.	Professor H. F. Osborn, Columbia University.
Botany.	Professor Wm. Trelease, Missouri Botanic Gardens.
Anatomy.	Professor Burt G. Wilder, Cornell University.
Psychology.	Professor J. McKeen Cattell, Columbia University.
Physiology.	Professor Jacques Loeb, University of Chicago.
Developmental Mechanics.	Professor T. H. Morgan, Bryn Mawr College.
Morphogenesis.	Professor Charles B. Davenport, Harvard University.

Each participant was limited to ten minutes and the papers were short and to the point. They will be printed in full in this JOURNAL at an early date. Special papers were presented by Professors Osborn, Williams and Wilder.

The following officers were elected for 1898:

*President*.—H. P. Bowditch, Harvard Medical School.

*Vice-Presidents*.—Professor Wm. James, Harvard University; Professor S. H. Gage, Cornell University; Professor H. S. Williams, Yale University.

*Secretary*.—Professor H. C. Bumpus, Brown University.

*Treasurer*.—Professor John B. Smith, Rutgers College.

*Executive Committee*.—Professor J. P. McMurrich, University of Michigan; Professor E. G. Conklin, University of Pennsylvania.

The annual dinner, given at Cascadilla Place, was a thoroughly enjoyable occasion. Professor Osborn presided in the absence of Professor Whitman, who, being unavoidably detained, was unable to give the address on 'Some of the Functions and Features of a Biological Station,' that he had

prepared. It will be published in an early issue of SCIENCE.

H. C. BUMPUS,  
*Secretary.*

BROWN UNIVERSITY, PROVIDENCE, R. I.

#### SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

THE meeting of the American Society of Naturalists at Ithaca, reported above, was unusually well attended, owing to the large number of affiliated societies meeting with it. In addition to the Physiological Society, the Morphological Society and the Psychological Association, which met last year at Boston, there was not only the Association of Anatomists, which last year postponed its meeting till the spring, but there were also two new societies—the Association for Botanical Morphology and Physiology, and Section H., Anthropology, of the American Association. The proceedings of all these societies, which will be fully reported in this JOURNAL by the Secretaries, were crowded with excellent papers. The meeting at New York next winter will undoubtedly be the most important in the history of the American Society of Naturalists and affiliated societies.

THE Royal Society has received, through Professor Anderson Stuart, telegraphic information that the expedition sent out to bore a coral reef at Funafuti has returned to Sydney, having carried the bore down to 698 feet, without reaching the bed rock.

At a meeting of the Board of Managers of the National Geographic Society on December 31, 1897, Alexander Graham Bell was elected President of the Society. This election fills the vacancy occasioned by the death of Mr. Gardiner G. Hubbard.

THE Parkin Prize of the Paris Academy of Sciences has been awarded to Dr. A. D. Waller, of London, for his investigations on the relations of nervous activity and carbon dioxide. The prize is of the value of about \$600.

M. RAMBAUD, French Minister of Education, Senator, and professor of contemporary history at the Sorbonne, has been elected a member of the Academy of Moral Sciences, in the room of the late Duc d'Aumale.

THE Berlin Academy of Sciences has appropriated three thousand Marks for the publication of a map of the Arabian desert of Egypt.

THE office of Astronomer Royal of Ireland, and the professorship of astronomy in the University of Dublin, has been conferred upon Mr. C. J. Joly, fellow of Trinity College.

WILLIAM HARPER, Chief of the Bureau of Information of the Philadelphia Commercial Museums, has returned to Philadelphia after a trip around the world taken in the interest of the Museums.

THE death is announced of Dr. Friedrich A. T. Winnecke, who some years ago made important contributions to the astronomy of position at the observatories at Bonn, Pulkova and Karlsruhe. On the establishment of the University of Strassburg, at the end of the Franco-German War, he was made director of the observatory, but his health broke down, and since that time he has been unable to accomplish any scientific work.

WE regret also to record the deaths of the following men of science: M. Imbault Huart, the French Consul at Canton, at the age of forty years, who was a high authority on the languages and geography of the Far East, especially of Formosa, on which he published an elaborate work; Dr. Giacomo Sangalli, professor of pathological anatomy in the University of Pavia, and Senator of the Kingdom of Italy, aged 76; Dr. Franz Ritter von Schneider, professor of chemistry in the University of Vienna.

GROUND was formally broken for the Museum Building of the New York Botanical Garden by President Samuel MacMillan, of the Department of Public Parks, on December 31st, with a nickel-plated pick and shovel presented to him at the site for the purpose by Messrs. Parker and Parshley, of the John H. Parker Co., contractors, in the presence of Messrs. Fallows and Ward, representing Mr. R. W. Gibson the architect, and Dr. Britton, Mr. Henshaw and Mr. Nash, of the Garden staff, and others. Appropriate remarks were made by President MacMillan and by Dr. Britton. The contract for the construction and equipment of the Museum Building, Power House and minor buildings has been awarded by the